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Conference on Church, Community and State

Oxford, July 12th—26th, 1937

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE

APPOINTED IN PURSUANCE OF RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY THE AUTHORITATIVE BODIES OF THE 'LIFE AND WORK MOVEMENT' AND THE 'FAITH AND ORDER MOVEMENT' IN AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER 1936

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At their separate sessions held in August and September, 1936, in successive weeks, the Universal Council for Life and Work, and the Continuation Committee of the World Conference on Faith and Order, passed Resolutions recommending the appointment of a Committee to review the work of œcumenical co-operation since the Stockholm and Lausanne Conferences, and to report to the Oxford and Edinburgh Conferences regarding the future of the œcumenical movement.

It was further agreed that this Committee should be appointed by a group representing various œcumenical movements, and should consist mainly of persons holding positions of ecclesiastical responsibility in the different Churches, but should also contain representatives of the view-point of laymen, women, and youth, and some officers of the œcumenical movements.

The group designated for this purpose, after consultation with the leaders of the movements and of the Churches, constituted the Committee, known as the 'Committee of Thirty-Five', as follows:

Jonkvrouwe C. M. van Asch van Wijck, President, World's Young Women's Christian Association.

The Rev. M. E. Aubrey, Moderator, Federal Council of Evangelical Free Churches, England and Wales.

Bishop James C. Baker, Methodist Episcopal Church, San Francisco.

Dr. Albert W. Beaven, President, Colgate-Rochester Seminary, New York.

Pasteur Marc Boegner, President, French Federation of Protestant Churches.

Dr. D. Y. Brilioth, Dean of Lund, Sweden.

Professor William Adams Brown, Union Theological Seminary, New York.

Professor Walter T. Brown, Victoria University, Toronto, Canada.

Dr. Samuel McCrea Cavert, Federal Council of Churches, U.S.A.

The Bishop of Chichester, Chairman, Administration Committee 'Life and Work'.

The Rev. Dr. J. Hutchinson Cockburn, Dunblane Cathedral, Scotland.

The Most Rev. Archbishop Germanos, Metropolitan of Thyateira, President, Orthodox Section 'Life and Work'.

Dr. Fred F. Goodsell, American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, Boston, U.S.A.

Pasteur Henry-Louis Henriod, General Secretary 'Life and Work'.

Canon L. Hodgson, Winchester, General Secretary 'Faith and Order'.

Miss Eleanora Iredale, 'Life and Work'.

Dr. Alphons Koechlin, Vice-President, World Alliance of Young Men's Christian Associations.

Dr. Hanns Lilje, Germany.

The Rev. W. F. Lofthouse, Principal of Handsworth College, Birmingham.

Sir Walter Moberley, Chairman, University Grants Committee, London.

Dr. John R. Mott, Chairman, International Missionary Council.

The Rev. Dr. Lewis S. Mudge, Presbyterian Church of U.S.A.

Bishop G. Ashton Oldham, Bishop of Albany, U.S.A., World Alliance.

Dr. J. H. Oldham, International Missionary Council, 'Life and Work'.

Bishop Edward L. Parsons, Bishop of California.

The Rev. William Paton, International Missionary Council.

Dr. Hans Schönfeld, 'Life and Work'.

The Rev. Canon Tissington Tatlow, D.D., Rector of S. Edmund the King, Lombard Street, London E.C; Financial Secretary, Second World Conference on Faith and Order.

Dr. Reinold von Thadden, Germany.

Dr. W. A. Visser 't Hooft, General Secretary, World's Student Christian Federation.

The Most Rev. the Archbishop of York, President, World Conference 'Faith and Order'.

Professor Stephan Zankow, World Alliance, Sofia.

Professor Dr. F. Zilka, Czechoslovakia, World Alliance.

General-Superintendent Dr. Zoellner, Germany.

All of these except Dr. Hanns Lilje; Dr. Reinold von Thadden; Professor Dr. F. Zilka; General-Superintendent Dr. Zoellner; were present when the Committee met for a two-day session on July 8th, 9th and 10th, 1937, at Westfield College, Hampstead. The Rev. Dr. William P. Merrill was also present by invitation for part of the time.

As a result of the deliberations which then took place the 'Committee of Thirty-Five' unanimously recommended that each of the two World Conferences at Oxford and Edinburgh should adopt the following proposals:

A WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

1. That the Conference regards it as desirable that, with a view to facilitating the more effective action of the Christian Church in the modern world, the movements known as 'Life and Work' and 'Faith and Order' should be more closely related in a body representative of the Churches and caring for the interests of each Movement.

2. That the Conference approves generally the following Memorandum:

The new organization which is proposed shall have no power to legislate for the Churches or to commit them to action without their consent; but if it is to be effective, it must deserve and win the respect of the Churches in such measure that the people of greatest influence in the life of the Churches may be willing to give time and thought to its work.

Further, the witness which the Church in the modern world is called to give is such that in certain spheres the predominant voice in the utterance of it must be that of lay people holding posts of responsibility and influence in the secular world.

For both these reasons, a first class Intelligence Staff is indispensable in order that material for discussion and action may be adequately prepared.

There are certain œcumenical movements, such as the I.M.C., the World Alliance for International Friendship through the Churches, the W.S.C.F., the Y.M.C.A., the Y.W.C.A. and the Central Bureau for Inter-Church Aid with which the new body should enter into relationship both in order that the life in them may flow into the Churches, and that those movements may derive stability and true perspective from the Churches. The actual approach to these would need to be determined with regard to the basis and function of each.

We regard as parts of the responsibility of the new body:

(i) To carry on the work of the two World Conferences.
(ii) To facilitate corporate action by the Churches.
(iii) To promote co-operation in study.
(iv) To promote the growth of œcumenical consciousness in the Churches.
(v) To consider the establishment of an œcumenical journal.
(vi) To consider the establishment of communication with denominational federations of world-wide scope as well as with the Movements named in the preceding paragraph.
(vii) To call World Conferences on specific subjects as occasion requires.

3. That the Conference approves the establishment of a World Council of Churches functioning through the following bodies:

(i) A General Assembly of representatives of the Churches (in accordance with a plan to be determined later) of approximately 200 members meeting every five years.
(ii) A central Council of (approximately) 60 members which shall be Committee of the General Assembly when constituted*, meeting annually, e.g.:
  (*a*) Twelve from North America appointed through the Federal Council.
  (*b*) Nine from Great Britain appointed in such manner as the Churches Great Britain may decide.
  (*c*) Eighteen from the countries on the Continent of Europe (to be assigned to the different countries).

*NOTE.—The constitution for the General Assembly shall be worked out by the Central Council in consultation with the Churches and the national Christian organizations.

(*d*) Nine representing the Orthodox Churches.
(*e*) Six representing the Younger Churches (to be appointed on the advice of the I.M.C.).
(*f*) Six representing South Africa, Australasia and areas not otherwise represented.

(One third of the representatives in each case to be laymen or women so far as possible. In the event of the number of laymen and women elected being less than one third of the total, the Council shall allot to one or more of the appointing bodies additional places up to the number of ten to be filled by laymen or women).

(iii) A commission for the further study of Faith and Order subjects to be appointed at Edinburgh and vacancies to be filled by the Central Council.

(iv) A Commission for the further study of Life and Work subjects to be appointed by the Central Council with a view to facilitating common Christian action.

4. That power be given to the Central Council to call into such relationship with itself as may seem good, other œcumenical movements.

5. That pending the creation of any new organization, each Movement shall carry on its own activities through its own staff.

6. That the Conference appoint a Constituent Committee of seven members to co-operate with a similar committee appointed at Edinburgh (*or* Oxford) to complete the details and to bring the scheme into existence.

* * *

N.B.—It is suggested that the General Assembly should approve the scheme for the Central Council, but should invite the constituents as described in section 2 to appoint the members of that Council in accordance with the scheme.

WESTFIELD COLLEGE.
July 8*th*—10*th*, 1937.

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